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ABSTRACT

Because of the high number of at-risk students at Carver Middle School (Meridian, Mississippi), the principal developed several programs to bring student achievement to the level commensurate with other students around the nation. The Early Bird Program is a Chapter One program of individualized work in math, reading, and language arts classes to provide remediation for students reading below grade level. The Safety Patrol program involves selection of students who are repeatedly referred to the principal's office for behavior problems to serve as patrol guards, with the goals of: (1) teaching participants self discipline; (2) giving students the chance to succeed and shoulder real responsibility; and (3) offering positive reinforcement and incentives for students who change their behavior. The Adopt-a-Student/Advisor-Advisee program involves the "adoption" of 6 to 15 students by a teacher who takes a special interest in each student's life. The Adopt-a-School program has expanded to involve the sponsorship of the school by 67 businesses. Other programs implemented at Carver Middle School include: (1) the Triangle Connection, a school-student-parent communication program; and (2) the Lean on Me program, which uses volunteers from Carver's National Junior Honor Society to tutor students who are having difficulty with school work. (KDFB)

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# Carver Middle School

Meridian, Mississippi

# Coming From Behind

## A "Catch-up" Philosophy in Education

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Carver Middle School
900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307

School of Excellence
1988-1989

Drug-Free School
1988-1989



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# What is a Student?

A student is the most important person ever in this school ... in person, on the telephone, or by mail.

A student is not dependent on us ... we are dependent on the student.

A student is not an interruption of our work ...the student is the purpose of it. We are not doing a favor by serving the student ... the student is doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

A student is a person who brings us his or her desire to learn. It is our job to handle each student in a manner which is beneficial to the student and ourselves.

(adapted by William W. Purkey from an L.L. Bean Co. poster: "What is a customer?" by J.M. Eaton)



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# Coming From Behind.....

## The story of Carver Middle School.

**Introduction**

Carver Middle School is a 6th and 7th grade school serving approximately 600 students from Meridian, MS. Many of Carver's students come from economically disadvantaged situations. Over 75% of Carver's students receive free or reduced lunch.

Because of this high number of at-risk students, Carver has created many programs to meet these students where they are and attempt to bring them up to level with other students from around the nation. Under the leadership of Robert Markham, programs such as the Early Bird Program, Safety Patrol, Lean on Me, and many others have helped many students to achieve academic success.

**Table of Contents**

I. Early Bird Program

II. Safety Patrol

III. Adopt-a-Student/ Advisor-Advisee Program

IV. Adopt-a-School

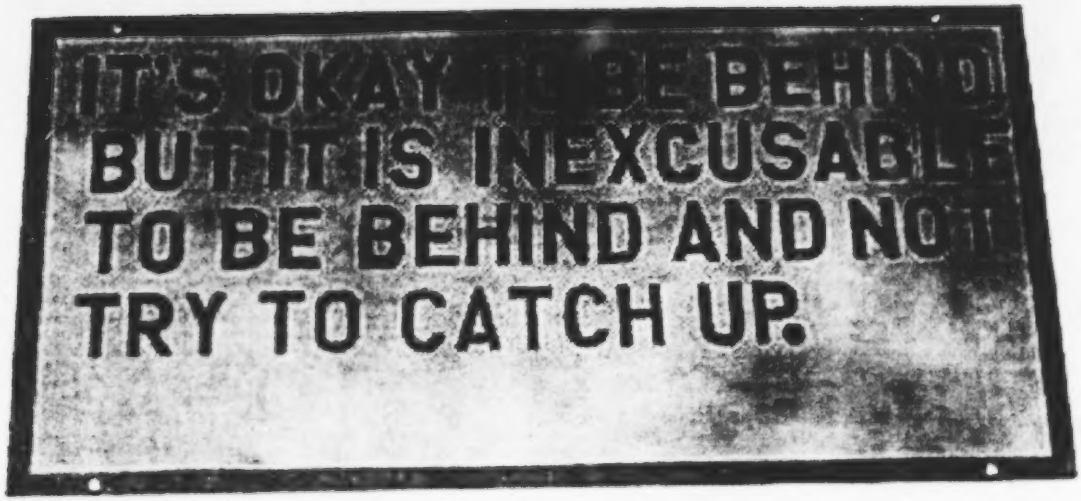
V. Other Programs and Media Coverage

Principal Robert M. Markham

Carver Middle School

# The Early Bird Program

# *School Motto:*




*(As seen on the gymnasium wall)*

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**A Seed That Matured**

Approximately eight years ago, a dream became a reality for the students and faculty of Carver Middle School. An idea was imbedded in the mind of Robert M. Markham to help students to get extra help in reading and math. Through his fortitude and determination, the seed of the Early Bird Program flourished into a thriving array of students who were achieving their goals in the early morning classes.

Mr. Markham often tells students about his "catch up philosophy." If a student is behind in his subjects and he works twice as hard to catch up, then eventually he will be on the same academic level as that student who is already on grade level. When a test, such as the Gates-Macginitie or the SAT, indicates that a student is performing below grade level in reading or math, he is recommended for the Early Bird classes. By attending the extended day classes, the student has a better chance of getting on grade level and becoming an all-around better student.

The aim of the administration and faculty is to present the Early Bird program as a positive venture for the student who needs extra help in reading, math and language arts. The program has been a success because of a partnership between home, school and community. Before a student is allowed to attend Early Bird classes, he must return a form signed by the parent giving his or her child permission to attend. Thus, the responsibility of getting the child to 6:30 a.m. classes rests on the parent. Involvement of community includes our adopters who donate time and tangible rewards which help to motivate student attendance, performance and improve student self-esteem. When a student gets on grade level, he is allowed to call his parents at work or home to relate this information to them immediately. The parent's enthusiasm and appreciation for the phone call is overwhelming.

During the end-of-year program, key speakers are chosen to speak to the Early Bird students on the basis of their ability to identify with the plight of the middle school and at-risk students. Most of the speakers come from similar backgrounds and have had similar experiences as the students themselves.

It is the belief of all concerned that if a child can successfully achieve in the Early Bird Program and regular classes, the dropout rate in the junior high and high school grades will decrease, and the percentage of students remaining in school until graduation will increase remarkably.

## The Early Bird Program

The Early Bird Program was created eight years ago by interested faculty members, staff and administration to help students working below the fiftieth percentile. Students come to school at 6:30 A.M. to work on reading, math, language arts, and computers. This is one hour before school begins for all students.

Students who work hard and who attend regularly show improvement in self-esteem, conduct, grades and attitude about school.

Students and parents are interested in the program and are constantly signing up for help all throughout the school year. We have had over 200 students attending and a faculty and staff of twelve working with them.

The Early Bird Program played a major role in Carver's receiving the National School of Excellence and the National Drug Free School awards from the United States Department of Education in 1988-1989.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Early Bird Program is a program of individualized work. Students work at their own rate toward mastery of objectives. Math, reading, and language arts classes serve both sixth and seventh grade students. A certified math and language arts teacher on each team is present in the class. Students report to class at 6:30 A.M. and work until 7:30 A.M.. Major emphasis is placed on math, vocabulary, study skills, and comprehension. Rewards recognize completion of all objectives at one level.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Early Bird Program at Carver Middle School was established to provide remediation for students reading below grade level in sixth grade reading. Since its beginning in February of 1988, the program was expanded to include sixth and seventh grade reading, language arts, and math. The program's goal is to increase the number of students reading on grade level before leaving Carver at the end of the seventh grade year.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDENTS SERVED

The students being served are sixth and seventh graders who have reading, math and language arts scores below the 50th percentile as determined by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. On the average, more than 300 students participate in the program each year.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Early Bird Program was subjected to an internal evaluation in May of 1991. The evaluation was conducted in several ways. Test scores on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills test were used to check student progress. At the end of each year, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire on the program. They are asked to comment on the program as well. This information is used when planning the program for the following year. The number of students served each year in the program is used to project the needs for the following year. Finally, the number of student reaching grade level for the first time and the number making honor roll or improving grades are used to evaluate the program. Success of the program is evident in that the students who attend regularly, make substantial growth in test scores, improve their grades and show increased self-esteem.

The Early Bird Program played a major role in Carver's winning two national awards, the School of Excellence and the Drug Free School Award, thereby bringing local, state-wide and national recognition to Carver. A video presentation, "Learning to Change," produced by the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta, Georgia, featured the Carver Early Bird Program.

## RESOURCES

As a result of test score data and in-class performance, teachers encourage students to become involved in the Early Bird Program. Parents are contacted by letter, telephone, conferences and interim progress reports. The principal and counselor also recommend students for the program when talking to parents. Some students with special needs who live out of the Carver school zone have requested transfers in order to participate in the Early Bird Program. Targeted students for the program are those qualifying for Chapter One, Special Education, and non-English students who need extra time on tasks. In addition, publicity on the program has been generated through the local newspaper. P. T. A. meetings also include discussions of the Early Bird Program to encourage participation.

## FUNDING

Funding for the Early Bird Program is provided through Chapter One. Teachers and teacher assistants for the Early Bird Program are issued supplemental contracts for this extension of employment and are paid from Chapter One funds.

## SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE

Samples of correspondence used to communicate information to or from parents are included on the pages to follow. Open communication between the school and parent is vital to the success of the program.

## WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT EARLY BIRD . . .

"I think it is very helpful and it shows that you all are really concerned about the welfare of our children."

-Linda Chaney

"In my opinion, it is wonderful to know that our children are receiving good quality education. This program will help them to be their best."

-Joyce L. Smith

"We had hard times trying to get there but most of the time we made it. I think that it was great to help the kids that way."

-Brenda Moore

"I think the early day program is great for those children who need additional time to do their work. Thanks!"

-Anna Moore

I like the program; it is progress for the children. It helps them keep up with the class and it also advances them."

-Laura Wilson

"I would like to say 'thank you' for all the help, time and patience put forth for all the students of the EBP."

-Anna M. Jones

"The Early Bird Program proved to be every successful for my two children. They both attained grade level. This is a very good program for at-risk students and regular students."

-Ruth D. Stewart

"I think my child did a lot of improving by coming to the Early Bird."

-Shirlene Clark

"Alisha was enthusiastic for the entire Early Bird Program. She reached grade level in reading and became an honor roll student. In addition to reaching grade level in reading at school, she has increased her reading at home. Alisha tells me when she finishes one book she begins another one. As a concerned parent, this makes me very happy. Your Early Bird teachers should be praised daily for the job they do. Thank you for Early Bird."

-Mary Chaney

**WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY . . .**

"I liked Early Bird a lot. It really did help me in reading. I think every school should have an Early Bird Program."

-Madocia Bonner

"I enjoyed the Early Bird Program because it helped me catch up on what I was behind with."

-Scenobia Emerson

"Early Bird helped me to get on my proper reading level. At one time I did not like getting up so early, but now I am glad I did!"

-Michael Aveline

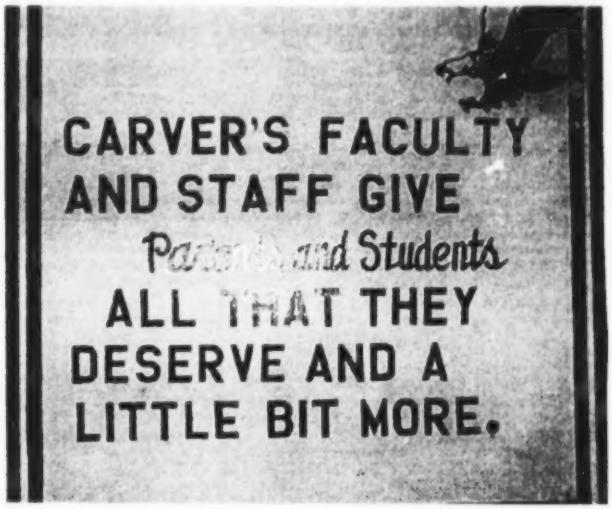
**WHAT THE TEACHERS SAY . . .**

"It's an excellent program. It would be beneficial for the elementary levels also. By the middle or the end of the year, students who began the year with a 3.0 reading level are on grade level, and that kind of progress speaks for itself."

-Audrey Walton

"Overall, the Early Bird Program is an outstanding one. This program should be implemented into every school district. Its outstanding feature is that it raises the spirit of each child and parent, and it is geared toward all reading levels. This program explains itself."

-Marilyn Smiley

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# The 'early bird' gets to learn

## 7th graders up at dawn to tutor kids

Rachel White

A motivation to help others pulls a group of seventh graders out of their beds and into a tutorial program each morning at Carver Middle School.

"Getting up at 5:30 every day is hard, but I joined the Early Bird program because I love to help the students," said Courtney Boswell, one of 40 tutorial students in Carver's Early Bird program.

Each day, the 225 students involved in the program report to school by 7 a.m., an hour before school begins, to receive extra help in reading, math, language arts and computers.

Morning is a perfect time to learn because a student's mind is fresh and unclouded, said math teacher Georgia Sims.

While some students come to Carver almost every morning, others may have tested below grade level in reading, math or language arts, said Principal Robert Markham.

One of the 12 Early Bird teachers said she appreciated the help the peer tutors give her.

"These tutorial students are great," Sims said. "They volunteer to do this, they come for no pay and they are ready, willing and able."

Peer tutors are also able to relate to other students in a different way than their adult teachers.

"We work with their one-on-one and they seem to learn better from other students," said Marcus Dancy, a seventh-grade peer tutor.

"Some come to talk and some say thank you, but rarely do you have someone sitting and doing nothing," said peer tutor Jorge Vivar.

Not only are these peer tutors helping the Early Bird students, but they are also learning themselves.

"I get to review what I did last year and it helps me remember it better," Dancy said. "I wish every student could be a peer tutor because it helps you appreciate teachers a lot more. We take roll and grade tests like they do."

Markham said the special program began in February of 1988 with only 40 students who needed extra help in reading. Because of its success, the Early Bird program has been imitated in the district's elementary schools and Kate Griffin Junior High, he said.

Sixth-grade reading teacher Marilyn Smiley said she is not surprised by the students' motivation to improve, even if it means lengthening their school day.

"They want to be motivated to upgrade their skills," Smiley said. "They are eager, ready and energetic."

Another reading teacher, Dollie Carter, agreed.

"They come voluntarily, in rain or shine, by car, bicycle or foot, and they're enthusiastic about improving," Carter said. "If they're not motivated when they get here, we do it for them."

Markham said the Early Bird students make every attempt to keep a perfect attendance record in hopes of winning a gift certificate to Wal-Mart at the end of the year.

"Kids have set up their own carpools and we've even had to reroute some buses, but this shows their commitment to improving," Markham said.

Maria Yates, one of the Early Bird pioneers, said middle school is an opportune time for this type of intervention because many sixth and seventh graders need extra attention, not only in academics, but in building their self-esteem.

"This is the age it needs to happen," said Yates, who is also an Early Bird teacher in language arts. "They don't feel like failures for needing help, and they know that if they don't get it now, they won't get it later on."

Rachel White/The Meridian Star

Gloria Pearson (above), language arts teacher at Carver Middle School, helps sixth-grader Tyone Neal with his spelling during the school's Early Bird program which meets an hour before regular classes begin. The program began in 1988 with 40 students and has increased to 225. Meridian's elementary schools and a junior high school have also implemented the program into their early morning schedule. Kimberly Bouyaud (right), one of 40 seventh grade peer tutors, works with sixth-grader Rosetta Marsh on improving her math skills. The peer tutors help students who may have tested below grade level in reading, math and language arts or those students who want to get ahead.

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# Carver Middle School

Meridian Public School District
900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307

School of Excellence
1988-1989

Office of the Principal

Drug-Free School
1988-1989

Dear Parent,

Your child, _____, has not been attending Early Bird classes on a regular basis.

We need to know if you intend to send your child to Early Bird class. If so, please sign below and have your child return this to his/her Early Bird teacher. We need this information as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Robert Markham
Principal

[ ] Yes, I would like for my child to continue in the Early Bird program.

[ ] No, I do not want my child to participate in the Early Bird program.

_____
Parent's signature

# Carver Middle School

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900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307

School of Excellence
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Office of the Principal

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Principal

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[ ] No, I do not want my child to participate in the Early Bird program.

_____
Parent's signature

# Carver Middle School

Meridian Public School District
900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307

School of Excellence
1988-1989

Drug-Free School
1988-1989

Office of the Principal

Dear Parents,

The Early Bird Program has been completed for this school term. We are pleased that so many of our students and their parents participated.

We are anxious to know how you feel about the program. Please complete the questionnaire below and return this letter to school by your child.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Markham
Principal

| YES | NO | |
|---|---|---|
| [ ] | [ ] | I plan to enroll my child in the Early Bird Program next year. |
| [ ] | [ ] | Did you notice improved work/study habits by your child? |
| [ ] | [ ] | Did your child reach grade level in reading this year? |
| [ ] | [ ] | Did you notice improved grades? |
| [ ] | [ ] | Does your child read at home? |
| [ ] | [ ] | Do you plan to encourage your child to read this summer? |
| | | How did your child get to school for the Early Bird Program this year? _____ |

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian

School of Excellence
Drug Free School
1988-1989

# Carver Middle School

900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307
(601) 484-4482
FAX: (601) 484-4942

Robert Markham
Principal

Paul Sheely
Assistant Principal

Parent/Guardian of _____.

We at Carver are very pleased that the Early Bird Language Arts and Math Programs will be available this year. Your child will have the opportunity to receive an extra hour of reinforcement in these subject areas. As you have read, graduation requirements have changed and future success in school will depend heavily upon strong language and math skills. If your child has weaknesses in Reading, English or Math, we encourage you to allow him or her to participate in this program.

The program will begin Monday, September 9. Classes will meet from 6:30 to 7:30 each morning. Parents will be responsible for transportation. **PLEASE URGE YOUR CHILD TO BE PRESENT AND ON TIME EACH DAY.**

If your child needs both language arts and math reinforcement, a schedule will be worked out for him or her.

Sincerely,

R. M. Markham

Maria Yates
Language Arts Teacher for Blue Team

Math Teacher for Blue Team

Please check the appropriate response, sign, and return this letter to school.

_____ Yes, I would like to enroll my child in the Early Bird Language Arts/Math Program. I agree to have my child at Carver promptly at 6:30 each school day.

_____ No, I would not like to enroll my child in the Early Bird Language Arts/Math Program.

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature

This is a Title I Program.

# Safety Patrol

## The Safety Patrol Program

**History**

For many years, Carver's Safety Patrol program was run in a very traditional fashion. Only the best behaved students were chosen to serve on the patrol, but the patrol was largely ineffective. Students did not listen to the patrol members when they asked them to follow the rules. Also, student interest in being on the patrol was very low.

That all changed, however, in 1991 when then assistant principal James Bounds decided to try an experiment. With the blessing of principal Robert Markham, Bounds chose the 12 roughest and toughest boys to be his safety patrol. It was easy for him to choose these boys, as many of them had spent plenty of time in his office the year before. The program began slowly as the community, parents, and most of all the teachers, had to be sold on it.

Bounds designed the program around modifying the behavior of the boys, changing them from negative leaders around the school into positive ones. By the end of the first year, those 12 boys showed remarkable improvement in their behavior, and for many the success carried over into their classwork. The "new" safety patrol concept has expanded to include as many as 40 to 50 students, and although it is not just behavior problems that are now included, the emphasis remains on including students that are less than model citizens.

**The Program**

Carver's safety patrol program is used to modify the behavior of students who are repeatedly referred to the office. The goals of the program are threefold: 1) To teach its participants self discipline, 2) to give students who have little success in other areas of the school a chance to succeed and shoulder real responsibilities, and 3) to offer positive reinforcement and incentives for those participants who change their behavior. Through coaching, incentives, and encouragement, the goals of the program are achieved.

**Operation of the program**

The assistant principal is in charge of the overall operation of the program. He is assisted by the principal and several other teachers. Supervision of the program includes meeting with the boys on a regular basis, assigning each boy to a post, monitoring the boys before and after school, and giving structure to the program as necessary.

**Safety Patrol Duties**

The Safety patrol program is based on giving real responsibility and duties to each of the boys involved in the program. These include all of the following duties, and many more:

1. Monitoring early arriving students in the gym
2. Releasing students from the gym
3. Monitoring the campus, before and after school
4. Greeting teachers in the morning
5. Helping teachers carry items
6. Opening doors for students and teachers
7. Monitoring the cafeteria
8. Breaking up fights
9. Hoisting and taking down the flag
10. Showing substitutes to their classrooms
11. Answering the phone (before the secretary arrives in the morning )
12. Assisting handicappedudents to and from the bus

**Incentives**

Students are encouraged to be responsible and modify their behavior. To encourage students towards these goals, incentives are offered. Each week a "Safety Patrolman of the Week" is chosen. This boy receives schoolwide recognition and a $5 gift certificate to Walmart.

Field trips are also taken with the safety patrol boys. Trips range from going to the "ropes course" to visiting the state capital. While on one trip to Jackson, the boys met the governor and were given a tour of the capital building by the lieutenant governor.

At the end of the year, the safety patrol boys are given a celebration. A "Most Outstanding" and "Most Improved" safety patrolman are picked for the year. Each of these boys receives a plaque and is honored at the awards program.

Sylvain Metz / Special to The Clarion-Ledger

Clad in "uniform," Delantric Evans surveys a crowd of Carver Middle School pupils waiting for buses after classes recently. Evans is one of about 40 male pupils at the school benefitting from an effort to include at-risk children in the patrol.

# Patrol matter of pride for at-risk youth

■ Meridian program sets troubled teens on another path.

**By Sylvain Metz**
Special to The Clarion-Ledger

MERIDIAN — They are more than names off the police blotter to Carver Middle School Principal Robert Markham.

They represent troubled young men who once passed through his halls.

"When you check the local police briefs and you look at arrests, you see a lot of those kids (came through) here," said Markham, six-year principal of the 600-student school.

Two years ago, Assistant Principal James Bounds suggested they enlarge the school's safety patrol to include "the toughest, meanest, largest boys with the worst discipline records," Markham said.

Until then, the patrol had a reputation as a reward for "good kids." Markham reasoned that problem youngsters would be helped by giving them the same responsibilities as model students.

Markham agreed to make changes in the program for the 1991-92 school year. Twelve boys were selected.

Their duties: Get to school by 7 a.m., raise the flag, patrol the walkways, help teachers carry in books, see other students proceed in an orderly fashion to and from the gymnasium during activities, break up fights and report arguments.

After school, patrol members lower the flag and man the bus lines to ensure order.

As an incentive, a reward system was implemented, offering individual recognition to the safety patrolman of the week. Popcorn, pizza and field trips were offered to patrol members at other times.

The program's results were dramatic, Markham said. Behavior of new patrol recruits improved, their self-esteem rose and their grades went up.

Safety patrolman Delantric Evans admits he had problems. The 14-year-old refused to pay attention in class, talked when he should have listened and didn't turn in homework. Last year, he was failing.

This is his first year on the expanded, 40-member safety patrol. Instead of failing grades, Evans now makes "Bs" and "Cs."

"I felt like I was headed toward trouble," he said. "Now I'm a good student."

# Carver Safety Patrol

By **Rachel White**
The Meridian Star

Carver Middle School Principal Robert Markham describes the 64 boys on the Safety Patrol as some of the roughest in school.

But last week they were commended for a remarkable act. About four Safety Patrol boys upheld their vows to patrol and supervise the behavior of their fellow students when they reported an incident of a gun on campus.

Last Friday, a Carver student was found to be in possession of a .25 automatic pistol after members of the Safety Patrol informed their principal. Meridian Public Schools Superintendent Larry Drawdy said the student would be recommended for expulsion during a hearing Wednesday.

"The boys came to me in my office and told me he had a gun in his pocket," Markham said. "I sent the assistant principal (James Bounds) to get him."

Markham calls the act remarkable because of the rough backgrounds of the boys on Safety Patrol.

"When you have kids who usually stick together and don't tell anything, it's comendable to see them do something like this," Markham said.

After the report, Markham called the patrolers into his office to praise their

# commended for act

efforts and to reward them with a $5 gift certificate to Wal-Mart and a T-shirt.

"I told them what might have happened if they hadn't turned the student in and to not feel bad because he was a friend," he said. "They not only helped him in the long-run, but they may have saved their classmates from harm."

The Safety Patrol used to be a reward for the model students who showed leadership, kept up their studies and earned good conduct reports. But three years ago, Bounds recommended to Markham that they begin selecting students who were the "toughest, meanest, largest and with the worst discipline record." Giving them more responsibility would not only build their self-esteem but also teach them leadership skills, they said.

Among their duties, patrol members:

- Arrive to school early.

Raise the flag in the morning and lower it in the afternoon.

- Help teachers carry in their books.
- Patrol the hallways and make sure other students behave while en route to and from the school.
- Supervise students boarding and unloading from buses.
- Try to improve grades, manners.

Markham calls the program a success simply because it has saved some "students-at-risk by turning negative behavior into positive behavior."

THE MERIDIAN Star

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# Potential problems become solutions at Carver school

When you empower someone with responsibility, you are giving that person a role in solving problems. That gives them an entirely different perspective.

Carver Middle School Principal Robert Markham hit the nail on the head this year when he turned safety patrol duties over to some of the roughest, toughest boys on campus.

These potential troublemakers were suddenly placed in charge of making the campus safer for their fellow students. What a way to solve a problem, especially when it works.

And it did last week when the safety patrol turned in a fellow student who brought a gun on the campus. The student apparently had no intentions of using the gun. He didn't threaten anyone. But you shudder to think what could have happened had the safety patrol not been in place.

"When you have kids who usually stick together and don't tell anything, it's commendable to see them do something like this," Markham said.

That's especially true when you put it against the background of youth violence that we've seen not only nationwide but also here in Meridian. It actually makes you feel there is still some hope in this world.

There is a lot more to this program than keeping watch over the campus. Safety patrol members are considered leaders and are expected to meet certain standards.

Along with extra responsibilities of coming t school early, helping teachers and raising an lowering the flags each day, etc., they are expect ed to improve their grades and manners. The are growing and stretching themselves as huma beings. And we envision that those who stic with it are going to be some of tomorrow's lead ers.

We commend Markham and his staff a Carver for this innovative approach to educatin students. They are taking strong-willed student who might quickly become troublemakers in typical classroom setting, and developing the into leaders. That energy is being channeled int something good, and those kids now have a cha lenge they can relate to while building self esteem.

We know the Carver staff won't bat a thosan with this program. With successes, there, too, wi be failures. But this shows there is no set way t handle education. To be successful, you have t take it almost on a student-by-student basis.

When you hear people talking about the nee to reform the education process to better reac each student ... this program and others like i are what they are talking about.

Opinions expressed in columns, editorial cartoons, guest editorials and letters on the Opinion page are those of the writer and not necessarily of The Meridian Star.

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# Adopt-a-Student/ Advisor-Advisee

**Adopt-a-Student Program**

The Adopt-a-Student program was created in response to the many needs of Carver's not addressed by the traditional school programs. In the original Adopt-A-Student program, each faculty member and staff member chose at least six students who were having problems which affected their self-esteem, mental, physical or social growth. Teachers then took a special interest in these students and did a wide variety of things for them. Some teachers even took their students on vacation and to other entertaining events, while others helped students find donated clothing or supplies.

The Adopt-A-Student program was expanded into the Advisor-Advisee program. In this program, each teacher adopts between 10-15 students. In this way, each student has an adult within the building who takes a special interest in their lives. Each week, the sponsor spends 30 minutes with his or her adoptees getting to know them better, talking about what is happening in their lives, and discussing various issues. In addition, the following suggestions of what to do with and for their adoptees are listed for the teachers in the handbook.

**Suggestions**:

1. Check with student's teachers to see what his weaknesses are.
2. Check student's records for both strengths and weaknesses.
3. Let student know that you want him to improve and suggest the following things that might help:
    a. Taking books home
    b. A special study time seven days a week
    c. Pay attention in class
    d. Ask questions
    e. Always turn in homework
    f. Try to be at school every day
4. Check the appearance of the child
    a. Medical, dental and health needs
    b. Grooming
    c. Clothing and shoes
5. Ask the child, "what would he like", if you were going to give him a reward for improvements.
6. Encourage him to eat breakfast at home or at school.

**Suggestions** (Contd)

7. Find out his birthday.
8. Encourage him to have good conduct.
9. Review his test papers in all classes.
10. Check for improvements.
11. Ask what he thinks about the adopt-a-student program.
12. Find out if he rides the bus to and from school.
13. Find out what he would like to do when he grows up.
14. Tell him whatever is discussed between you two is confidential.
15. Find out what he wants for Christmas.
16. Find out about his hobbies.
17. Ask this question, "If you could change one thing about yourself, what would you change?"
18. Find out about his favorite foods.
19. Find out about his family.
    a. Number of brothers/sisters and ages
    b. With whom does he live
    c. Where does he live - address
20. Who is his favorite teacher and why?
21. Work with him to improve his achievement test scores (tutor him, go over difficult areas, etc.)
22. Bring him a special "gift" -- inexpensive happy (example: bookmarks, pencil, paper, etc.)
23. Give him non-material rewards, such as praise for doing a good job.
24. Teach about good manners, good attitude, respect for self and others and responsibility. DRILL this over and over as often as possible.
25. Get free coupons from local restaurants for mini pizzas, cokes, etc.
26. Get in touch with your adopted students' parents to report good news.

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# Adopt-a-School

**CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL**
**Partners In Education Success Story**

In July 1987, Robert M. Markham became the second principal in the history of Carver Middle School. He had served as assistant principal for three years and was aware of the strength and weaknesses of Carver Middle School. Markham had the charge of making things better for Carver's faculty, staff and 600 plus students.

Markham knew that he had inherited an outstanding staff. He also knew that the "sky would be the limit" for Carver if he could accomplish three things: 1) get the faculty to work as a team, 2) find ways to motivate the student body, and 3) involve parents and the community.

The Chamber of Commerce's Adopt-A-School Program was in its early stages and Carver had only two sponsors, Computerland and Perkins Grocery. Both were small businesses with a lot of potential for growth. Markham was discouraged from recruiting businesses to become involved in the adopt-a-school program. After a couple of years of two adopt-a-school sponsors, Markham decided to recruit businesses to become involved in the adopt-a-school program.

During the 1988-1989 school term, Carver Middle School became one of two schools in the entire nation to receive both the National School of Excellence and the National Drug Free School Award from the United States Department of Education. With lots of publicity about the awards won, it was an excellent time to recruit partners in education. Markham contacted churches, businesses, funeral homes, department stores, individuals, etc. He involved his entire staff, the P. T. A. and other adopt-a-school sponsors to invite them to visit our campus to show the United States Department of Education Representatives how much community support Carver Middle School had. The community showed their support on the community night, where over 300 parents, educators, politicians and business representatives showed up to show their commitment and support for the boys and girls who attended Carver.

Since 1989, Carver's partnership, with their Partners in Education, have constantly grown from **two** to **sixty-seven** sponsors. They provide cash donations, computers, bicycles, gift certificates, free Nintendos or video rentals, free coupons, gifts for students and teachers, such as massages, lunches, free dental care, etc.

Carver's philosophy is that each business, both large and small, can do something to help the school of their choice. One of their adopt-a-school sponsors donated one dollar a day for each day the school would be open.

When you look at Carver's list of adopt-a-school sponsors, the assortment of large, medium, small businesses, and individuals you will surely conclude that **"You don't have to be a star to be involved in our school."**

# Carver's Sponsors

American Auto Insurance Agency
Audrey's Touch of Class
Blockbuster Video
Carver Middle School Faculty & Staff
Coast Video
Computerland
Cracker Barrell Old Country Store
Cypress Lodge
Econo Lodge/Comfort Inn
El Chico Restaurant
Enterprise Funeral Home
General Motors
Fitkins Memorial Church of the Nazarene
First Union Baptist Church
J's Enterprise
James River, Inc.
Little Caesars
Meridian Central Optimist Club
Meridian Housing Authority
Mr. & Mrs. Jim White
Metro Professional Plaza
Dr. Perry Wallace
Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Mr. & Mrs. James Perkins
St. Paul United Methodist Church
Mr. Jack Stack
Stockton Photography
Tarver Program Consultants, Inc.
Wal Mart - Bonita Drive
Wal Mart - Hwy. 19 North
Waste Management
Wide Circle Hunting Club
Newell Chapel C.M.E.
Dr. Ronnie Purvis
Maust Woodworking/Sunshine Berry Farm
Queen City Optimist Club
Dr. V. J. Edwards
Janet Lynn Green
St. James AME Church
Sylvia Hickman
Dr. Britt McCarty
Southeastern Black Law
Enforcement Officers Assoc.
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Wall
Ben & Doug's Enterprises
Dr. Colie Crutcher
Uni-Fam Publishers
Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Fontan
Berry & Gardener Funeral Home
Skate Odyssey of Meridian
Embroidery by Romage
Crawford Satellite & Computer
Chisolm Auto Repair
William Carey
Bumpers Drive Inn
Goodie Basket
Paradise Pets
Carol's Flea Market
Shoney's Restaurant
St. Peter AME Zion
Mr. Jessie Palmer
J. C. Penney
Mr. Q. V. Sykes
Dr. Reggie Sykes
Ryan's Steak House
Mr. & Mrs. Marcus Trotter
Hudson Consultants
Mr. & Mrs. Wiley Strahan

# Media Coverage and Other Programs

# Other Programs

## *The Triangle Connection (School-Student-Parent Communication program)*

When a triangle of communication is formed between the parent, student and school, a child's chances for success are increased. To improve communication between these three parties, Carver Middle School has implemented the "Triangle Connection". This is a three-part system that will enable parents to stay informed about what is happening at school and give students extra assistance for their homework.

**Features**

- **Homework Hotline**- phone system that will give students and parents access to daily homework assignments
- **Homework Help-line**- personalized assistance with homework, provided by teachers over the phone.
- **Message Delivery System**- phone system that will deliver messages to parents, such as absentee notification, PTA announcements, etc...

## *The Extended School Year*

Carver Middle School's Extended School Year offers incoming sixth graders and seventh graders chance to improve their math and language skills. The program consists of two, three week terms held during summer vacation. Each term has a new group of students .

Math and language arts are taught in two 90 minute blocks. Students are then provided a break from their studies and provided with a snack. After break time, a fun activity, ranging from a volleyball game to an entertaining video, is provided for the students. Transportation to the school is provided for students living in several of the housing projects and the surrounding areas.

Teachers for the summer program are asked to review skills from the previous year. No new material is introduced. Textbooks and grades are out as teachers attempt to present the material in a less traditional manner.

## *In-House In-School-Suspension*

In attempt to come up with a creative and productive solution for students who

misbehave, Carver began its In-House In-School-Suspension. Although the district runs its own In-School-Suspension program, housed on another campus, several shortcomings of this program created the need for Carver to begin its own program.

Because the district I.S.S. program is housed on another campus, students often have no transportation to and from the campus. Students also have no direct supervision from their teachers while at the district I.S.S. Carver's In-House I.S.S. was created so that students could serve their time while under the direct supervision of their teachers. In this way, students do not fall behind their class because of their misbehavior.

The program runs two days a week and is supervised by a teacher's assistant. Teachers provide that day's assignments for each student being kept. The teacher assistant provides any assistance the student needs during the day.

## *Block Scheduling*

Carver is continuously working towards improving student achievement in their language and math skills. Block scheduling, begun in the 1995-96 school year, was implemented in attempt to give students more time in their language arts and math classes.

Carver's school day is divided into four 90 minute blocks. Students take one block of math, one block of language arts (English and reading combined), one block of science and social studies (alternating quarters), and two 45 minute electives. The longer class periods allow teachers to present more in depth lessons while using traditional and non-traditional techniques.

## *Team Teaching*

Team teaching has been a part of Carver since the 1993-94 school year. Teams now consist of 6 academic teachers- one 6th grade language arts teacher, one 7th grade language arts teacher, one 6th grade math teacher, one 7th grade math teacher, one social studies teacher, and one science teacher. Teams are provided with 45 minutes of individual planning time and 45 minutes of team planning time.

The teams have created a "school within a school" atmosphere for Carver's students. The sense of community helps students to adjust to the new demands of the middle school. The team also provides consistency for students as each teacher on the team has the same rules and consequences. Discipline is also worked at together by all team teachers. Included in a student's consequences is a team meeting and a team meeting with the student and the parent.

Team meetings provide teachers with time to work at interdisciplinary units, meet with parents concerning grades and behavior of their student, conduct phone conferences with parents, and many other tasks. Team meetings have increased communication between teachers, between teachers and students, and most of all, between teachers and parents.

## *Triangular Bell*

Communication between the school and the home are vital to the success of a child in school. Parents are often unable to come in for a conference with their child's teachers because of their own busy schedule.

With $500 from a grant provided by South Central Bell, speaker phones were placed in each team captain's room. With these phones, parents and teachers are able to set up conference

calls with one another. The phones in the classroom have greatly increased the home-school communication.

## *The Accelerated Reader Program*

The Accelerated Program was implemented at the beginning of the 1996 school year. Accelerated Reader is a school-wide, individualized reading program which allows students to move at his/her own pace and reading level. The goal of the program is to have students read more and develop a love of reading.

Students are able to choose a book from over 800 titles, ranging from 2nd grade to 12th grade and above reading level. When the student has finished the book, he/she takes a computer generated test. Points are awarded based on the level and length of the book and the score received on the test.

Over 1,500 books and 1,000 computer generated tests were purchased to get the program started. Students are required to carry an Accelerated Reader book with them at all times. Computers for test taking are located in all Language Arts classes, the library, computer lab, and various other classrooms. Language arts teachers provide students with at least an hour of reading time each week. Students also read their books in other classes while they wait for other students to finish assignments and at home.

A program is held twice a year to celebrate success and encourage reading. At this program, prizes are given based on points earned in the Accelerated Reader Program. For every five points that a student earns, his/her name is entered into a raffle for incentives, ranging from a radio to a new bike. Incentives are purchased by adopt-a-school sponsors.

## *Lean On Me*

Cooperative learning has proven to help all students involved, including both accelerated and remedial students. The Lean On Me program uses volunteers from Carver's National Junior Honor Society to tutor students who are having difficulty with their school work. Some students actually respond better when they receive the instruction from their peers.

Study/work periods are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the spring, from 2:35-3:15 p.m.

**1996-97 Sample Schedule**
**Carver Middle School**

**Prologue**

This is a sample schedule submitted for approval. Below are noted some specifics about the schedule.

**6th Grade Schedule**

- Each 6th grade student will receive 90 minutes of math, 90 minutes of Language arts, and **two** 44 minute electives **everyday**. Science and social studies classes will meet every **other day** for 90 minutes.
- T.A.G. class will be considered one of the student's two electives.

**7th Grade Schedule**

- Each 7th grade non-T.A.G. student will receive 90 minutes of math, 90 minutes of language arts, 44 minutes of Career Discovery, and **one** 44 minute elective **everyday**. Science and social studies classes will meet **every other day** for 90 minutes.

-The 15 T.A.G. students will also receive 90 minutes of math, 90 minutes of language arts, 44 minutes of Career Discovery, and **one** 44 minute elective **everyday**. Their schedule will differ, however, in that they will go to T.A.G. class during the second 45 minutes of their social studies and science period (s.s. and science will be taught on alternating days). **Pulling students from a class is similar to the way that T.A.G. is done at the elementary level**. Teachers will be asked to work with the T.A.G. students to keep them caught up in their work.

**6th gr. Student**

| | | **"A" Schedule** | **"B" Schedule** |
|---|---|---|---|
| HR | 7:40-7:57 | Announcements and Channel One | Announcements and Channel One |
| 1 | 8:00-9:30 | Language Arts | Language Arts |
| 2 | 9:33-11:03 | Social Studies | Science |
| 3 | 11:06- 1:02 (26 minutes for lunch) | Math | Math |
| 4 a<br>-----<br>4b | 1:05- 1:48<br>----------<br>1:51- 2:35 | Elective I<br>----------<br>Elective II | Elective I<br>----------<br>Elective II |

**7th gr. Non-T.A.G Student**

| | | "A" Schedule | "B" Schedule |
|---|---|---|---|
| HR | 7:40-7:57 | Announcements and Channel One | Announcements and Channel One |
| 1 | 8:00-9:30 | Language Arts | Language Arts |
| 2 | 9:33-11:03 | Social Studies | Science |
| 3 | 11:06- 1:02 (26 minutes for lunch) | Math | Math |
| 4 a<br>---<br>4b | 1:05- 1:48<br>---<br>1:51- 2:35 | Career Discovery<br>---<br>Elective | Career Discovery<br>---<br>Elective |

**7th Grade T.A.G. Student**

| | | "A" Schedule | "B" Schedule |
|---|---|---|---|
| HR | 7:40-7:57 | Announcements and Channel One | Announcements and Channel One |
| 1 | 8:00-9:30 | Language Arts | Language Arts |
| 2a<br>---<br>2b | 9:33- 10:17<br>---<br>10:19- 11:03 | Social Studies<br>---<br>T.A.G. | Science<br>---<br>T.A.G. |
| 3 | 11:06- 1:02 (26 minutes for lunch) | Math | Math |
| 4 a<br>---<br>4b | 1:05- 1:48<br>---<br>1:51- 2:35 | Career Discovery<br>---<br>Elective | Career Discovery<br>---<br>Elective |

Staff photo

**Discipline and** respect are major keys at Carver.

# Carver Middle School gets national attention

By **Lynnetta Cooksey**
The Meridian Star

Carver Middle School received national attention this year when a group of its teachers and administrators traveled to the National Middle School Convention to talk about the school's outstanding programs.

Principal Robert Markham, assistant principal Paul Shelly and four teachers traveled to New Orleans in November 1995 to present two programs to conventioneers.

This was the fourth year Markham had been asked to present at the convention. This was the first year the school was asked to present two programs and the first year the school was able to send teachers.

See **Carver,** Page 7F

## Carver

Continued from page 4F

Markham said the decision was made to send teachers because the convention was being held so close to home.

The group gave a two-hour assembly entitled "Poverty is No Barrier to Being a School of Excellence." The school is known locally for its willingness to seek out untraditional ways to find funds for programs to help its students.

"It doesn't take a whole lot of money to be good if you have teachers and parents working together," Markham said.

The group also presented a program on its Safety Patrol and several of its other innovative and award-winning programs.

The Safety Patrol is a program which takes students with discipline problems and assigns them specific duties in order to teach them responsibility and respect. These students help control litter on campus, supervise other students and assist teachers with various other jobs.

The Early Bird Program, another Carver program featured at the national convention, is one that the school has used for several years, and which has had phenomenal results. Students are able to come to school early for one-on-one help with certain subjects.

In January, Markham was asked to deliver the keynote address at the second annual Atlanta Public Schools' Middle School Mini Conference at West Fulton Middle School in Atlanta. He spoke on building a positive climate for learning.

Markham was asked to give a 30-minute keynote speech and a two-hour workshop with his staff members, Safety Patrol boys and Walter Patton, a Meridian High School student who was featured in a video "Learning to Change."

About six years ago, when Patton was a sixth grade student reading three grades below level, he enrolled in Carver Middle School Early Bird Program. Patton went on to get on grade level at Carter, make the honor roll and be inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. He has maintained honor status and will graduate in May.

# Carver will offer summer program

By **Lybbetta Cooksey**
The Meridian Star

Carver Middle Schools will offer have a six-week summer program for new and returning students designed to sharpen their basic skills.

The program is open to returning seventh graders and entering sixth graders who attended Harris Upper, Oakland Heights, Crestwood and West Hills elementaries this year.

The program will consist of two three-week sessions. Each student will have a 90-minute class in math and a 90-minute class of language arts. There will also be a 15-minute snack break between sessions and an hour of sports activities, videos and games.

Carver principal Robert Markham said the summer enrichment program is meant to help students with skills they need to master before taking the Iowa Basic Skills Test in October.

"Our kids lose a little bit over the summer," he said. "We are trying to keep fresh on their minds some of the skills taught in sixth grade and in elementary schools."

Another group Markham said might benefit from the program are those who did not quite master those skills during the regular school year.

"With some kids who did not master the skills during the year, this gives us the opportunity to work with them on a more individual basis," he said.

Subday, May 26, 1996/ The Meridian Star/ Page 6A

# designed to sharpen students' skills

**Who:** Entering sixth graders and returning seventh graders
**What:** A summer-enrichment program meant to sharpen basic skills in language arts and math
**When:** June 10-June 28 and July 1-July 23
**Where:** Carver Middle School

For more information, call 484-4482.

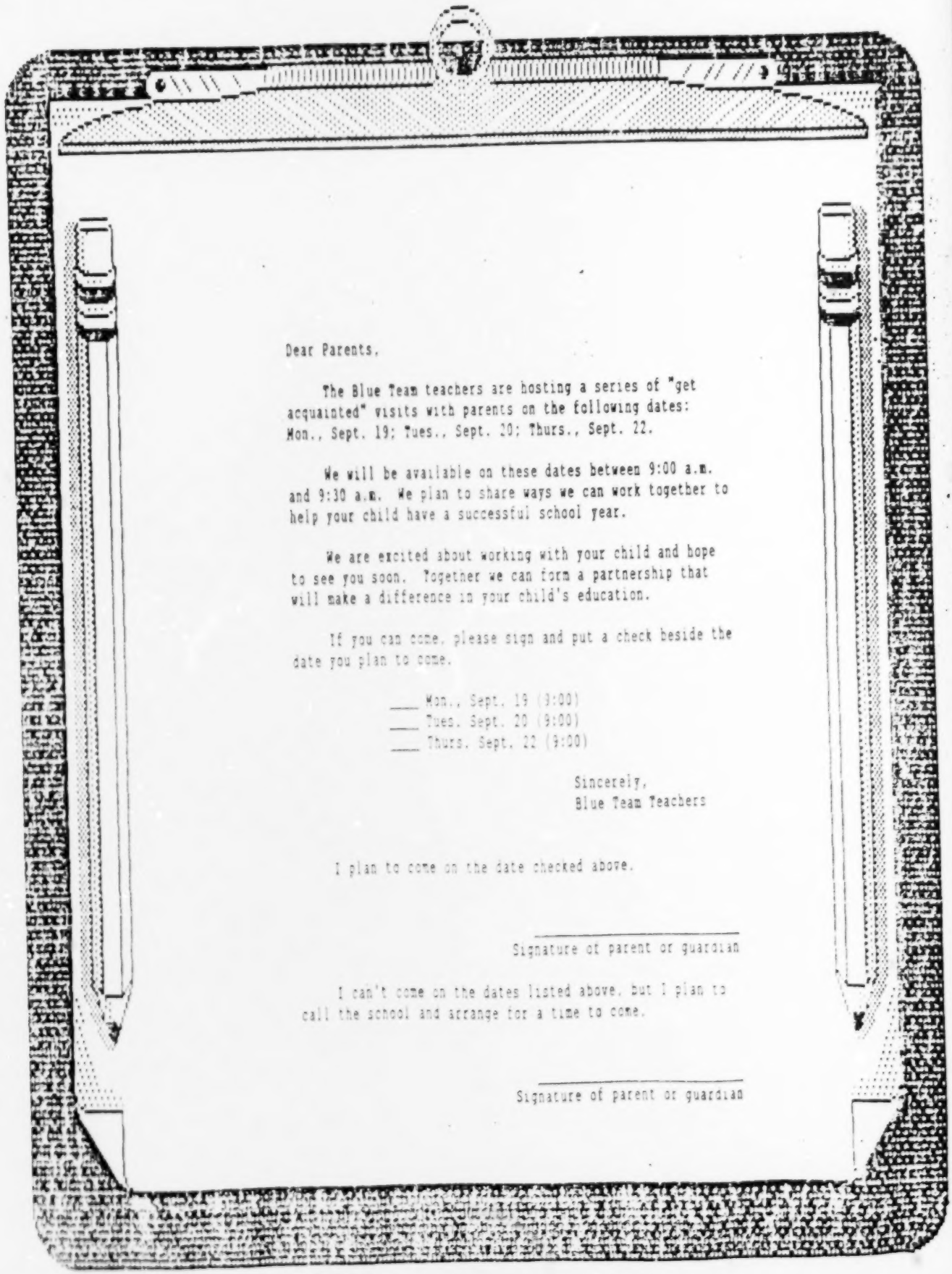
Markham said the program will also focus learning good study habits. He said many students do not do well in school because they have never been taught how to study.

The hour-long fun time will be different every day, Markham said. The school has recently purchased a new educational video library and students will be able to watch these during the free time. He said various games and athletic events will also be used during this time.

The two three-week sessions are June 10-June 28 and July 1-July 23. Sessions will begin at 8 a.m. and end at noon daily. Transportation will be provided from Western Gardens, Sowashee Court, Mountain View Village and the surrounding area.

The program is funded by Title I, a federal program that uses special classes and activities to help at-risk students. Certified teachers with experience and successes in teaching middle school students will be employed with assistants and a principal.

Parents must commit to have their children involved for the entire three-week term. For more information, call 484-4482.



Dear Parents,

The Blue Team teachers are hosting a series of "get acquainted" visits with parents on the following dates: Mon., Sept. 19; Tues., Sept. 20; Thurs., Sept. 22.

We will be available on these dates between 9:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. We plan to share ways we can work together to help your child have a successful school year.

We are excited about working with your child and hope to see you soon. Together we can form a partnership that will make a difference in your child's education.

If you can come, please sign and put a check beside the date you plan to come.

___ Mon., Sept. 19 (9:00)
___ Tues. Sept. 20 (9:00)
___ Thurs. Sept. 22 (9:00)

Sincerely,
Blue Team Teachers

I plan to come on the date checked above.

_____
Signature of parent or guardian

I can't come on the dates listed above, but I plan to call the school and arrange for a time to come.

_____
Signature of parent or guardian

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School of Excellence
Drug Free School
1988-1989

# Carver Middle School

900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307
(601) 484-4482
FAX: (601) 484-4942

Robert Markham
Principal

Paul Shelly
Assistant Principal

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Welcome to our team! We look forward to working with your child this year as we implement team teaching. You and your child are important members of our team, which will be known as the Blue Team.

We will have a period to use for group planning, counseling students, and meeting with parents. We are available for conferences from 11:10 - 11:40 each day except Wednesday. Tandem (elective) teachers are not included on our team due to scheduling, but conferences can be arranged with them also. Please call the school (484-4482) to arrange all conferences.

Teachers will discuss the rules for our team the first week of school. These rules are posted in classrooms. Please help at home by stressing the importance of good behavior at all times.

**Team Rules**

1. Be seated, remain quiet, and have all materials ready when class begins.
2. Follow directions the first time they are given.
3. Display appropriate behavior at all times.
4. Show courtesy and respect for teachers, classmates, and visitors.
5. Remain seated until dismissed by teacher.

Rule violations will result in student conferences, letters or calls to parents, detention, team meetings, and other consequences available in the assertive discipline plan.

Again, we look forward to having a good year. We are sure that by working together, we can help your child have one of the best school years ever.

Sincerely,

Maria Yates, Team Captain
Georgia Sims, Co-Captain
Mary Anderson
Barbara Lewis
Lloyd Smith
Cris White

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____.

I am sure that, as a concerned parent, you see the need to correct any problems your child may be having at school.

This letter is to inform you that your child is having difficulty in the following area(s):

——Tardy to homeroom (TARDY BELL RINGS AT 7:40 A.M.)

Dates tardy:_____

——Tardy to class _____times

——Failure to have books or other materials in class

_____

___Failure to follow directions

——Failure to listen

— Talking in class/ blurting out

——Interrupting the teacher

——Getting out of seat without permission

——Keeping hands/feet/objects to himself or herself

——Disrespectful of teacher

Please discuss this with your child. If this difficulty is not corrected, an after-school detention will be assigned.

Together you and I can help your child succeed. Please feel free to call the school at 484-4482 if you have any questions or would like a conference. Also, please sign and return this letter so I will know that you are aware of the situation.

Sincerely,
Blue Team Teachers
Marie Yates
Georgia Sims
Mary Anderson
Barbara Lewis
Lloyd Smith
Cris White

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

## Behavior Modification - 21 days

**Student**

Gets sheet from homeroom teachers
Puts on academic teachers' desk each period - Picks up at the end of period
Takes home **each** day to get signed
Bring back to homeroom teachers so next one can be issued

**Teacher**

Complete and give to the student before he or she leaves the classroom
Homeroom teachers collect previous day's sheet and keeps in a file. Keep a record of any times the previous sheet is not returned. (Please record number of times and dates).
Send note to parent informing him or her that the behavior modification sheets are not being signed and returned. In order to continue, parents must call or meet with the child's academic teachers.

**Parent**

Get sheets from the child each day, sign, and give back to the child to return to homeroom teachers.
If your child fails to bring the sheet home, please provide consequences for not doing so.
Write a note requesting another sheet. A note may substitute for the sheet three times.
Please understand that this approach toward behavior modification will work **only** if students, parents, and teachers all work together to implement the program.

**NOTE**

Due to the popularity of this program, we want to offer it to all parents who request it. In order to do this, a student may be placed on the program for one time only during the school year. Parents are still encouraged to come for conferences, write notes to teachers, or call for updates on your child's progress throughout the school year.

# Carver Middle School

School of Excellence
Drug Free School
1988-1989

900 44th Avenue
Meridian, MS 39307
(601) 484-4483
FAX (601) 484-4943

Robert Markham
Principal

Paul Shelly
Assistant Principal

October 4, 1996

Dear Parents

We are very proud to announce that our school is participating in the Accelerated Reader Program. This is an individualized program that allows each student to move at his or her own pace and reading level. We need **your help** to make **the program successful.**

The goal is to have our students read more and to develop a love of reading. As a result, your child will become a better reader and a better student.

Your child will choose books from our library. Each book has a point value based on reading level and number of words. After reading each book, students take tests to measure their comprehension. Points assigned are based on the point value of the book and the score on the test.

We will award prizes here at school for points students earn. Parents, however, are our best motivators and we are counting on you to emphasize the importance of **reading at least thirty minutes** each night. Students must have their books at school each day, and must take them home each night to read. Reading each night is a required homework assignment.

Please sign the agreement below, and have your child return it to school. Again, thank you so much for your help in making this reading program a success for your child.

Sincerely,

Language Arts Department
Carver Middle School

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**Please sign and return this section to your child's English teacher.**

**I will insist that my child, _____, will read his or her Accelerated Reader book at least thirty minutes each night.**

_____
**Signature of Parent or Guardian**